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Eligibility for Unemployment?

Submitted by: Jim Braselton

9/23/2009

Question:

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, it would appear as though employees furloughed are eligible for State of Georgia Unemployment benefits on the furlough days.

Are employees eligible for unemployment benefits on the furlough days? If so, can Human Resources give guidance as to how to obtain those benefits?

Rationale:

This issue affects all employees. Rather than one employee determining the course of action and trying to spread the word, it would be much more efficient for Human Resources to indicate to employees how to contact the Georgia Department of Labor and complete the necessary forms so that they receive the appropriate compensation for the furlough (layoff) days in a timely manner.

It would be nice if the forms that needed to be completed were available here on campus and the effort was coordinated with the Georgia Department of Labor rather than having the entire corps of employees descent on the Georgia Department of Labor office in a few weeks to answer the question.

Senate Response:

RFI on September 23rd from Jim Braselton on Eligibility for Unemployment. Response from Paul Michaud.

10/14/2009: Mr. Paul Michaud, Director of Human Resources, has responded to your rfi in the following way:

Michael,

I did check this morning with Barbara at our local Dept. of Labor office in Statesboro to find out if our furloughed employees would be eligible to collect unemployment benefits in November.

Her response was as follows: A furloughed employee may be eligible to collect unemployment benefits based on the amount of unemployment they would have received if they had not worked the entire week.

Let me explain. An unemployed person in the State of Georgia can receive between \$49/wk - \$330/wk depending on the number of quarters of work eligibility and what they were earning before being furloughed. Example: If a person was earning \$50,000/yr divided by 2080 hours per work year = \$24/hr. Since faculty and staff will be receiving two days of holiday pay for Thursday and Friday: $\$24 \times 16 \text{ hours} = \384 for those two days. Let's assume the person would have received the maximum unemployment benefit of \$330/wk., the two day-earnings would be deducted from the unemployment benefit, and in this example it's a negative \$54...thus the person would not receive any unemployment.

Second example: A person is earning \$25,000/yr divided by 2080 hours = \$12/hr and the person get holiday pay for Thursday and Friday ($\$12 \times 16 \text{ hrs.} = \192). Since we don't know how many quarters the person has previously worked, let's assume his maximum unemployment for a week was about half of the maximum of \$330, his Thursday/Friday earnings of \$192 would be greater than his unemployment weekly benefit of \$150, thus he would not receive any unemployment compensation. Now if the person was eligible for the full \$330 of unemployment benefits, he would receive the difference ($\$330 - \$192 = \$138$).

The Thursday/Friday earnings must be less than the weekly unemployment benefit to receive unemployment compensation. The basic answer to your question is yes, a person might be able to collect unemployment benefits but.....the person needs to do the math and determine what their unemployment benefit would have been based on DOL guidelines.

The Unemployment Office is the only office that can tell a person what his/her weekly unemployment benefit would be based on past earnings. Hope this helps and please let me know if I can be of additional assistance. Paul